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ABSTRACT

A study examined parent-child differences in the Family Communication Patterns (FCP) model using the FCP's socio- and concept orientation measures extended to include measures of structure of control and involvement with the expectation that developmental differences in interpretation by parents and children will be demonstrated via differing associations among the various measures. The subjects included 43 parent-child pairs from the San Francisco Peninsula in which at least one parent attended a parenting seminar at least once, voluntarily or under court order, from 1983 to 1986. The children were at least 10 years old but had not graduated from high school. A second group included 71 parent-child pairs from a Catholic school where the children were seventh through twelfth graders. Confidential and separate self-report questionnaires were designed through review and modification of existing instruments and were administered to the parents and children. Respondents were primarily upper-income, white, and from two-parent households. Results indicated that meaningful structural differences exist between parent and child interpretations of family communication norms, and that a great deal of quantitative and qualitative disagreement exists between parent and child regarding the implications of the measures. Although the small sample size limits the generalizability of the results, further analysis and development of the FCP model may ultimately help researchers find measures that may be applied at a system level. (One table of data and 4 figures are included; 32 references and a list of questions asked are appended.) (RS)

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Developmental Differences in
Parent-Child Interpretations of
Family Communication Patterns:
Implications for Mass Communication Research

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ABSTRACT

Communication patterns within the family often have been documented as important influences on children's media use, political socialization and learning. Recently, limitations in the Family Communication Patterns typology developed by McLeod and Chaffee (1972) have come under scrutiny. This study analyzes age-related issues of parent-child agreement on family communication measures. It is concluded that both meaningful similarities and important differences exist between parent and child on family communication interpretations. Implications of the findings for the study of the family in mass communication are discussed.

Developmental Differences in
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Communication patterns within the family often have been documented as important influences on children's media use, political socialization, and learning both from school and from the media (Tims & Masland, 1985). Despite the amount of attention paid to family communication, however, research in this area has been theoretically weak (Tims & Masland, 1985). Similar to the history of the study of media and children, the study of communication and family is beginning to progress from static, monolithic theories to more sophisticated theories in which the complexities of cross-generational, developmental, and contextual issues are increasingly considered (e.g., Chaffee & Meadowcroft, 1983; Meadowcroft, 1986). In addition, researchers often emphasize the need for obtaining system-level measures of the family rather than individual impressions due to the variance in family members' perspectives (Miller, Rollins & Thomas, 1982;

Brown & Kidwell, 1982; Walters, Pittman & Norrell, 1984). The current study addresses some of these emerging issues from the perspective of a family communication model particularly popular among mass communication researchers.

Present state of knowledge

Family communication patterns have been of interest to researchers since theorists such as Newcomb (1953) posited that interpersonal communication environments influence how people view their world. Through the communication process, individuals define a frame a reference for interpreting the world (Tims & Masland, 1985). In developing this frame of reference, individuals learn to focus on certain elements in the information environment, excluding or de-emphasizing others. As a result, family communication patterns can inhibit perfect communication. Perfect communication, according to Chaffee & McLeod (1970), theoretically would be that which leads to the accuracy of each person's perceptions about the other's cognitions.

The Family Communication Patterns index developed by McLeod, Chaffee, and others has been particularly popular among communication researchers for locating differences among families in media use, political knowledge and participation, academic achievement, conformity, and other information seeking behavior (Lull, 1980; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972; Chaffee & Tims, 1976; Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971; Chaffee, McLeod & Wackman, 1973;

Meadowcroft, 1986).

According to the Family Communication Patterns model (FCP), families can be identified in terms of the relative emphasis they place on two dimensions of communicative style. Families high on socio orientation emphasize interpersonal harmony. In such families, children are encouraged to defer to adults and give in on arguments rather than risk making someone angry. Families high on the second dimension, concept orientation, emphasize the value of ideas, even at the risk of controversy. Children are encouraged to challenge ideas, participate in family decision-making, and weigh evidence on both sides of an issue before making up their minds (Chaffee, et al., 1966).

Families low on both dimensions ("Laissez-Faire"), generally lack a socialization influence from the parents. Children in such families will need to rely on communication from outside the family in order to construct their frame of reference for interpreting information. Families high on socio orientation but low in concept orientation ("Protective") encourage the child to get along with others by steering clear of controversy. Little information is provided on which to base one's views. Families high in concept orientation but low in socio orientation ("Pluralistic") emphasize the development of conceptual thinking with few social restraints. A child can reach a controversial conclusion without fearing a conclusion different from that of her parents will endanger family relations. Families high on

both orientations ("Consensual") expose children to controversy but expect the child to think in concert with the rest of the family.

The model has provided valuable information for communication researchers. Protective families are high media users (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971), for example, while pluralistic families watch little television but pay much attention to news. Pluralistic families are the most likely to participate in political campaigns, are more knowledgeable about public affairs, make better grades in school, and emulate their parents more than those from other family types (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971).

Issues in need of resolution

Despite the FCP model's popularity, however, researchers recently have pointed out a number of theoretical and methodological weaknesses in the model that need to be resolved (Tims & Masland, 1985; Ritchie, 1986; Meadowcroft, 1986; Meadowcroft & Chaffee, 1983). As applied by the majority of researchers, for example, the family environment is treated as a stable trait, although a number of studies indicate that family communication is a developmental, interactive process (Meadowcroft & Chaffee, 1983; Meadowcroft, 1986; Rollins & Thomas, 1979). In addition, and perhaps related, the measures focus on the parent's role in the communication process, rather

than on the mutual interactive relationship (Meadowcroft, 1986). Since the model seems to have been developed from a parent's perspective, it is unclear how relevant these measures are from a child's point of view (Ritchie, 1985). Lastly, the model has been questioned due to unreliability in the measures both within subject over short periods of time and across family members (Tims & Masland, 1985; McLeod, Chaffee, & Eswara, 1966).

Developmental Issues

Research on family communication assumes that children are active participants in the communication process and that their cognitive abilities may constrain communication, affecting their comprehension of messages (Meadowcroft, 1986). Children appear to progress from a socio orientation to a more concept orientation in adolescence, reflecting cognitive changes as they develop abstract thinking strategies (Chaffee, McLeod, & Atkin, 1971; Meadowcroft & Chaffee, 1983; Meadowcroft, 1986). Concept measures appear too abstract for pre-adolescents to handle, while at adolescence children and parents appear to converge on their evaluations of concept measures (Tims & Masland, 1985). Yet, although younger children may appear more socio oriented than older children, Meadowcroft (1986) holds that socio orientation may require more sophisticated perspective-taking abilities than a pre-adolescent is capable of applying. Ritchie (1986) has

suggested that all the child needs in order to exist in a socio-oriented environment is the ability to follow parent's orders. This, however, does not mean the child understands the implications behind the concept of socio orientation; rather, the child simply may be obeying orders in order to avoid consequences. As a result, although the child may be more successful at labeling socio-oriented behaviors than concept-oriented behaviors, both the concept and the socio measures may not be understood at a deeper level, due to a lack of relevance to the child's frame of reference and a lack of fit with her cognitive abilities.

Agreement as a developmental issue

The general disagreement between parent and child reports, then, may reflect a developmental psycho-structural difference, rather than a parallel, quantitative one. As Maccoby notes (1980), developmental changes in thinking are structural changes, not merely an accumulation of more bits of information. Since the measures are primarily from a parent's perspective rather than from a child's, the child may not only be in a poor position cognitively to evaluate the concepts operationalized by the questions, but also may be attempting to overlay his or her own perspective on the matter. The difficulty may go beyond the fact that concept-orientation is an abstract concept and socio orientation requires perspective-taking. Since the questions are

from a parenting perspective rather than a child-oriented perspective, the child needs additional perspective-taking skills in order to answer them as intended by the researchers. This undoubtedly is asking too much of most children, partly due to their cognitive limitations, and partly due to their own natural biases as subjective participants with a great stake in communication within the home.

As a result, agreement measures such as correlations between parent and child on family communication patterns may be misleading. Measures of parent-child agreement on family communication measures often produce correlations under .25 and sometimes near zero, indicating far from "perfect" agreement (McLeod, Chaffee & Eswara, 1966; Tims and Masland, 1985). But this disagreement may reflect interpretive differences rather than evaluative ones. Socio orientation may in fact "mean" something different from the child's perspective than it does from the parent's. This would explain McLeod's and Chaffee's (1969) ironic finding that socio orientation, the pattern stressing deference, appeared to achieve the opposite effect, and that a lack of socio orientation appeared actually to produce more conformity. It is probable that children focus on more concrete elements of family communication than "socio" or "concept" orientations, such as psychological involvement and rulemaking. A review of the general literature on family communication reveals that these two elements have been the most

often studied in family communication processes (Rollins & Thomas, 1979).

The concept of involvement has been studied under a variety of names, with slight variations in definition. Generally, involvement may be conceptualized as supportive behavior among family members characterized by cohesion, a feeling of belonging. Rollins & Thomas describe involvement, which they call "support," as characterized by warmth, supportive acceptance, and nurturance. Involvement, at its most basic level, then might be considered a positive psychological investment in the family. One easily can imagine such a concept being relevant to the child, whose life at first revolves around oneself and one's family and later expands to include schoolmates and others. Involvement has been shown to correlate positively with a child's internal locus of control, social competence, cognitive development, conformity, and creativity (Rollins & Thomas, 1979). The implications of involvement for specific mass communication behaviors are as yet unclear, but active mediation by parents, as opposed to mere covieing, can affect children's perceptions of television content in a variety of ways (Corder-Bolz, 1980; Messaris and Sarrett, 1981).

The structure of control--that is, the method of rulemaking within the family--also has received much attention in the psychological literature. Baumrind (1966, 1971) developed a

particularly useful conceptualization of families along a continuum of control that has parallels to the FCP model (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). Her typology includes "Authoritative" families, those emphasizing somewhat democratic control (control tempered with self responsibility), and "Authoritarian" families, which emphasize unquestioned authority. Authoritative parenting is most likely to correlate with academic achievement and social adjustment (Baumrind, 1966; Dornbusch, et al., 1987). Rollins & Thomas (1979) report that moderate control also correlates with conformity and cognitive development. Since rulemaking implies consequences for rule breaking, one can imagine this concept also would be relevant from the child's point of view and would have implications for media use behaviors.

Ritchie (1986) has suggested that the FCP model's socio index may be "double-edged," measuring 1) the tendency toward parental assertion of control and 2) the tendency toward supportiveness and tact. These imply both the structure of control and involvement. Ritchie also has suggested that the concept index may measure parents' tendency to restrict their exercise of control. This implies less structured control but, similar to the socio index, a high degree of involvement.

Involvement, Structure of Control and the FCP Model

Both involvement and the structure of control are implied in

the FCP model. Laissez-Faire families, which emphasize neither concept nor socio orientations, are described as having little effect on the child's socialization (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). This implies low involvement and less structured control. Protective families, which emphasize social harmony at the expense of entertaining controversy, would appear to be highly involved in social relations but also highly restrictive: this would indicate high involvement and highly structured control. Pluralistic families, those emphasizing the sharing of ideas in a non-threatening social atmosphere, would seem to be highly involved but less structured in control. Finally, consensual families, which are high in both socio and concept orientations, might be expected to exhibit high involvement and highly structured control.

Yet, while the model implies these distinctions, they have never been empirically validated. Regarding involvement, for example, Tims and Masland (1985) have pointed out that the FCP questions do not tap frequency of communication within the family, but rather the perception of norms. "Often" to one respondent may mean once a week, while to another it may mean three times a day. Thus, although the Laissez-Faire family has been assumed not to communicate much (Chaffee & McLeod, 1972), it is unclear from these measures whether this truly is the case. It is conceivable, for example, that the statements instead have been so well internalized by family members that they remain

unspoken (Tims & Masland, 1985).

The current study explores parent-child differences in the FCP model, via the FCP measures' relationships with the concepts of involvement and control. It is expected that developmental differences in interpretation by parents and children will be manifested via differing associations among the FCP measures and with the measures of structure and control. The psychological structure of family members' perceptions of family communication norms are tapped via multi-dimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis.

It is anticipated that similarities will be illustrated in the general representations of family communication variables among individual family members in multi-dimensional scaling, but differences will be uncovered primarily in the hierarchical cluster analysis. Parents, for example, are expected to exhibit more discrimination among variables, as illustrated by a greater number of discrete variable clusters, than will be observed in the child's data. It is expected that, especially in a dual solution that accounts both for similarities and differences in interpretations, variable clusters will roughly represent the previously identified Socio, Concept, Involvement, and Structure orientations, suggesting the potential strength of a system-level model of family communication.

Method

Respondents

Respondents were two groups of San Francisco Peninsula school children and one each of their parents or guardians. The first group, of 43 parent-child pairs, included Sunnyvale area parents, grandparents or guardians with at least one child 10 years old or older but not yet graduated from high school. At least one parent from each household attended a parenting seminar offered by a school psychologist at least once between 1983-1986, either voluntarily or under court order. The second group, of 71 parent-child pairs, was taken from a Catholic school in Santa Clara and included 7th through 12th graders. In the parenting seminar group, the oldest child not yet graduated from high school was selected for the study, along with the parent attending the seminar, if that was known. In the Catholic Academy sample, each parent was instructed to fill out only one questionnaire, even if he or she had more than one student attending the Academy.

Instrument

Separate self-report questionnaires were designed for parents and for children, to be answered separately and confidentially by each participant. Questions used in the

current analysis to assess structure and involvement were designed through review and modification of other, previously tested instruments that have assessed involvement and structure characteristics of the family environment. (Schaefer & Olson, 1981; Moos, 1974; Ladewig & White, 1984). Many questions on one questionnaire were repeated on the other so that comparisons of agreement on factual and belief items could be assessed. Some questions considered relevant only to the parent or the child were included only on the relevant survey. The questionnaires sent to the parenting seminar participants included several questions about the seminar which were not included in the Academy sample.

Procedure

Questionnaires with cover letters were mailed to approximately 100 parenting seminar participants in early March, 1987. Directions included with the questionnaires instructed parents and children to fill out their surveys separately and confidentially, without consulting anyone else (except the author if they had questions or concerns). Children were advised separately that their participation was optional and confidential, and they were instructed to seal their completed surveys in an envelope provided before returning it to the parent for mailing to assure confidentiality. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were provided for the return of the questionnaires.

Follow-up postcards were sent one week later. Passive consent letters were distributed to approximately 250 Academy students in early March for delivery to their parents. Questionnaires followed a week-and-a-half later, following the same procedure as given the parenting seminar group. Only those students who wished to participate took questionnaires home. Questionnaires were returned to the school instead of through the mail. Reminder notices were sent home one week following the distribution of the questionnaire. The somewhat low response rates were attributed to the length of the questionnaire, in addition to the personal nature of questions regarding family communication patterns. In addition, due to budgetary considerations, only minimal follow-up was possible. The questions analyzed in the current study may be found in the Appendix.

A frequency distribution of the data showed that, although a nearly equal number of male and female children responded to the survey, 73% of the parents responding were female. Eighty-one percent of the children lived with both parents, with an equal percentage of children (9%) living only with their mother or with one parent and another adult. No children reported living in a single-parent household headed by the father. The sample was primarily upper-middle income, with 33% of the households reporting lower-middle or low incomes. The population was composed 65% of whites, with Asians the largest minority group

(20%).

To assess whether the two sample groups were sufficiently comparable, t-tests were performed on the measures used in this analysis. The Academy parents answered more positively than did Sunnyvale parents regarding how often they recreated with their children ($p < .05$), and the Academy children were somewhat older than the Sunnyvale children ($p < .01$). No other differences between the groups were significant. On the basis of these findings, the groups were combined for later analyses.

Analysis

Measures of involvement and structure first were analyzed for error. Intercorrelations among variables for parent and for child were examined in order to identify and discard the most "noisy" variables. In other words, only those variables which correlated discriminately among other variables both for parent and for child were retained. To specifically test the relationships previous researchers have implied between the FCP typology and control and involvement, Chi-square tests of the FCP typology with the involvement and structure dimensions for parents and children were performed. Second, correlations between parent and child on each measure were computed to determine whether disagreement consistent with previous studies existed. Third, age differences were investigated among the measures. Lastly, Euclidean dissimilarity measures among

variables were computed via the Proximities algorithm in SPSSx, first for child and parent separately, and then for child and parent together. Two-Way Nonmetric Multidimensional Scaling then was performed on each set of proximities, using the ALSCAL algorithm in SPSSx. In addition, hierarchical cluster analysis was performed on each set of proximities via the compactness method in the CLUSTER algorithm of SPSSx. The clustering solution then was superimposed on the multidimensional scaling solutions for maximum interpretability.

Results

Relationships among dimensions

Chi-square tests of the relationships previous researchers have implied between the FCP typology and control and involvement approached significance for structure among parents and for involvement among children. As predicted, Laissez-Faire (Low socio, Low concept) and Pluralistic (Low socio, High Concept) parents were more likely to be low on structure of control ($p < .10$), but there was no corresponding tendency toward high structure of control among the protective (high socio, low concept) or consensual (high socio, high concept) parents (Table 1). Among parents of older children, the tendency did hold for

protective families as well, but there still was no apparent relationship for the consensual parent. The effect was not significant for parents of younger children, and the effect was not significant among the children themselves.

Among children, the expected low relationship of involvement with the Laissez-Faire orientation approached significance ($p < .10$) with a lesser tendency toward high involvement for the other orientations (Table 1). There was no involvement effect for the parent other than a nonsignificant tendency toward low involvement for the Laissez-Faire orientation.

Parent-Child Differences within dimensions

Correlations of the Parent's Socio, Concept, Structure and Involvement dimensions with the Child's dimensions revealed the highest correlations between Parent and Child Structure ($r=.53$, $p < .0001$) and between Parent and Child Involvement ($r=.51$, $p < .0001$). The correlation between Parent and Child Socio dimensions also was high ($r=.37$, $P < .0001$). The correlation between Parent and Child Concept was, as expected, lower ($r=.14$, $P < .10$). Taking into account the reliability of each index, the maximum correlation for Structure (parent's $\alpha = .71$; child's $\alpha = .72$) would have been .93, for Involvement (parent's $\alpha = .76$; child's $\alpha = .56$) .89, for Socio (parent's $\alpha = .76$; child's $\alpha = .71$) .94, and for Concept (parent's $\alpha = .70$; child's $\alpha = .56$) .77.

Correlations between parent and child for the individual measures in each index also were computed. For the socio measures, correlations ranged from .13 to .29, with the highest correlation on "you'll know better when you grow up." Correspondence on "Don't argue with parents," on which Tims and Masland (1985) found highest parent-child correlations, was slightly less ($r=.25$). Correlations on concept measures ranged from .07 to .31, with the highest correlation on whether the child's opinions are requested. The measure with the lowest correlation assessed whether every member of the family has some say in decisions. Variables of involvement ranged in correlations from .22 to .45, with the highest correlation on how often the family does fun things together and the lowest on whether the parent and child recreate together enough. Correlations on measures of structure both were in the .40 range. Thus, measures appeared most consistent on structure, followed by involvement, then socio, and then concept.

To determine whether there might be a developmental trend in the responses to the measures, correlations were computed between the child's age and each response. Age was negatively related to the child's socio orientation ($r=-.26$, $p < .01$), the child's structure orientation ($r=-.19$, $p < .05$), and the child's involvement orientation ($r=-.24$, $p < .01$). None of the parent's dimensions were significantly related to the child's age, reflecting stability in the parent's orientations despite the

child's developmental level. No age relationships were found for concept orientation for either family member.

To investigate the relationship of age changes with parent-child agreement, the parent-child correlations were computed on each dimension first for families in which the child was 13 and under, and then for those with children 14 and older. Consistent with the results from previous studies, agreement on socio measures decreased with age (from $r=.51$ to $r=.25$), and agreement on concept increased with age (from $r=.05$ to $r=.25$). There also were some age differences in the involvement orientation (from $r=.54$ to $r=.45$), reflecting the change in the child without a corresponding change in the adult. The correlation for structure orientation increased slightly with age (from $r=.46$ to $r=.56$). To test the changes for significance, hierarchical regressions assessing the interaction of age with the child's evaluation of the communication environment on the parent's evaluation of the communication environment were computed. These were not significant, indicating that the changes in correlations were largely due to unreliability in the measures.

Age changes among individual variables also were computed to determine which items exhibited the greatest or the least change over time. How often the family does fun things together was the most consistent measure (from $r=.45$ to $r=.46$). Other age differences on the involvement and structure measures ranged from

.03 to .18. Although differences in the .20-.30 range were common among the socio and concept measures, the most dramatic difference was found in the concept orientation measure of whether every family member has some say, which was negatively correlated for younger children ($r = -.10$, not significant) but positively correlated for older children ($r = .25$, $p < .05$). Again, these differences could be due largely to a lack of reliability in the children's responses.

Psychological structures for parent and child

For the child, a 2-dimensional multidimensional scaling solution was accepted, with a stress value of .16 and R^2 of .83, after 4 iterations (Figure 1). Dimensions were identified as 1) horizontal: Locus of Involvement (emphasis on parent or on child); and 2) vertical: Structure of Control (emphasis on the abstract--ideas and negotiation--or on the concrete--such as rules and physical involvement). A 2-dimensional solution also was accepted for the parent (Figure 1), with a stress value of .17 and an R^2 of .81, after 6 iterations. Dimensions again were identified as Locus of Involvement and Structure of Control. The linear fit was more scattered for parent than for the child, but both solutions were accepted as sufficiently reliable and interpretable.

There were some differences in the location of variables for parent and for child, but none appeared radically so. The major

differences included a larger discrimination between "work before play" and "set ways of doing things at home" for parents than for children; a larger discrimination and along a different dimension (Structure of Control) for "how often recreate together" and "recreate together enough" by children; a more positive evaluation along the Structure of Control dimension by children for "parents ask my opinion" and "every family member has a say"; a reversed association for "ideas are important" and "see both sides of an issue"; and variance along different dimensions for "give in on arguments" and "some things shouldn't be talked about"--as well as "don't argue with adults" and "don't argue with parents' ideas" for parent and for child. In a general sense, however, associations among variables appeared similar. Due to the small sample size and the likelihood of a certain amount of error variance in multidimensional scaling solutions, the differences were not considered interpretable. The clustering solution produced two major sets of variables for the child and three for the parent (Figure 2), indicating the presence of structural differences in associations among variables. Associations within the major clusters were similar, again indicating a general correspondence between respondents despite some structural differences.

For parent and child together, a 2-dimensional solution was accepted (Figure 3), although the stress value was rather high, at .25. The R^2 was correspondingly lower, at .69. Although a

3-dimensional solution obtained a stress value of .17 and an R^2 of .78, this solution was rejected because it did not contribute to the interpretability of the data. Since 2-dimensional solutions adequately represented the parent and child, and the third dimension obtained did not appear to represent any parent v. child differences, the third dimension was attributed to noise in the data. The dimensions were consistent with the previous solutions and were, again, named "Locus of Involvement" and "Structure of Control." The hierarchical clustering solution produced four major sets of variables (Figure 4), corresponding to the Concept, Socio, Involvement, and Structure dimensions. Reliabilities of the system-level clusters were as follows: Socio, $\alpha=.77$; Concept, $\alpha=.65$; Structure, $\alpha=.77$; Involvement (without Mutuality, Accuracy or Frequency), $\alpha=.76$.

Discussion

The present analysis supports the hypothesis that meaningful structural differences exist between parent and child interpretations of family communication norms. Associations in a more general sense are consistent for parent and child, for the most part varying along similar dimensions and in similar directions. Parent-child correlations among measures reveals a great deal of quantitative disagreement, however, and

hierarchical clustering and chi-square analyses reveal qualitative disagreement regarding the implications of the measures.

An age trend for children away from socio orientation, highly structured control, and involvement was supported, but no age trend was apparent for concept orientation. In addition, no corresponding developmental trend was revealed among the majority of parents, although Laissez-Faire and Pluralistic parents, as well as Protective parents of older children, did show the expected differences in structure of control. Parenting style thus appears to remain constant, despite the changing focus and cognitive abilities of the child.

Correspondence among parent and child was greatest for measures of structure of control and involvement, which appears to indicate that, as hypothesized, these dimensions are more within the child's domain for meaningful analysis than are the concept and socio dimensions. The possibility that this indicates, instead, that parents and children simply differ more on variables of socio and concept orientation was not supported by the hierarchical clustering analysis. Instead, differences in the psycho-structural relations among variables appeared to locate meaningful differences in the interpretations of the elements of family communication. It is important to recognize the exploratory nature of this study, however, and the limitations of small sample size and topic-specific measures

regarding involvement and structure. It is not known whether measures that assess a wider range of control and involvement behaviors will produce similar results.

Parents appear to make more discriminations than do children in associations among variables, which is not surprising considering parents' higher levels of developmental sophistication. Children, however, make more discriminations among variables of involvement than do parents. This supports the hypothesis that involvement is a more salient variable for children and that changes in communication perceptions are developmentally related changes in cognitive structure, as opposed to merely changes of degree in opinion.

That children associate structural elements such as "work before play" and "set ways of doing things" with the elements of socio orientation (e.g. "don't argue with adults," "you'll know better when you grow up," "give in on arguments"), while parents associate the structural elements with variables of involvement instead, may be the most instructive difference uncovered in this study. Children associate the elements of involvement with the FCP's concept orientation (e.g. "see both sides of an issue," "every family member has some say") instead, while parents view the elements of concept orientation as a separate matter entirely. Parents, then may view "involvement" more as a means of input into the child's way of life via rules and example, with emphases on fitting into society or on ideas as separate issues.

To the child, however, fitting into the family via rules and fitting into society may be related issues. Distinguishing appropriate family behavior from appropriate societal behavior will require perspective-taking and comparison skills which the child may not yet have developed. And, to the child, involvement includes more than rules and examples but, also, taking into account the child's ideas on issues.

The implications of these differences merit further investigation. Although many studies support the notion that children themselves prefer authoritative parental control, as opposed to authoritarian or permissive control (e.g. Baumrind, 1966), their construction of "authoritativeness" may be somewhat different than the parents' and may, then, have different behavioral implications. It is possible, for example, that a lack in consistency of family rules with a family's societal mores may cause confusion for the child. Likewise, a child whose family does things together and takes the child's perspective into account, besides simply setting down rules of operation, may be better able to reconcile inconsistencies in family and society-based behavior norms.

This analysis still leaves open the question of how well children understand the concept, socio, involvement and structure measures. It is possible that the results obtained herein reflect children's cognitive difficulties in answering such questions as much as they reflect meaningful differences in

perceptions of family communication norms. In addition, the small sample size limits the generalizability of these results, as well as the ability to trace the developmental progression of family communication perceptions. Follow-up studies with larger sample sizes will be needed. Nevertheless, these results clearly point to the need to develop measures relevant to both parent and child in order to understand the implications of our measures for mass communication behaviors. Since agreement was greatest on involvement and structure, these dimensions merit further development and their relationships to mass communication variables should be explored. Some relationships among these dimensions and the FCP typology approached significance, but this analysis indicates that they certainly are not interchangeable with the FCP. Thus, as additions to a modified FCP index that better taps the child's perspective on family communication, they may prove quite useful.

The fact that parents and children corresponded on the multi-dimensional scaling analysis indicates that it may be possible to develop a measure valid for both parent and child. Since the additive indices were more reliable for combined parent and child than they were for either parent or child alone, a system measure of family communication may be both possible and powerful. Additive typologies, however, have been criticized elsewhere as invalid as a system-level measure (White, 1984). Nevertheless, these results indicate that even an additive

measure may be preferable to individual reports of the family communication environment if one is interested in family-level characteristics or behaviors. Further analysis and development of the FCP model, with additional exploration of the concepts of involvement and structure, may ultimately help researchers find measures that may be applied at a system level.

Table 1

Chi-square analysis of Parent's and Child's FCP orientation
with involvement and structure of control

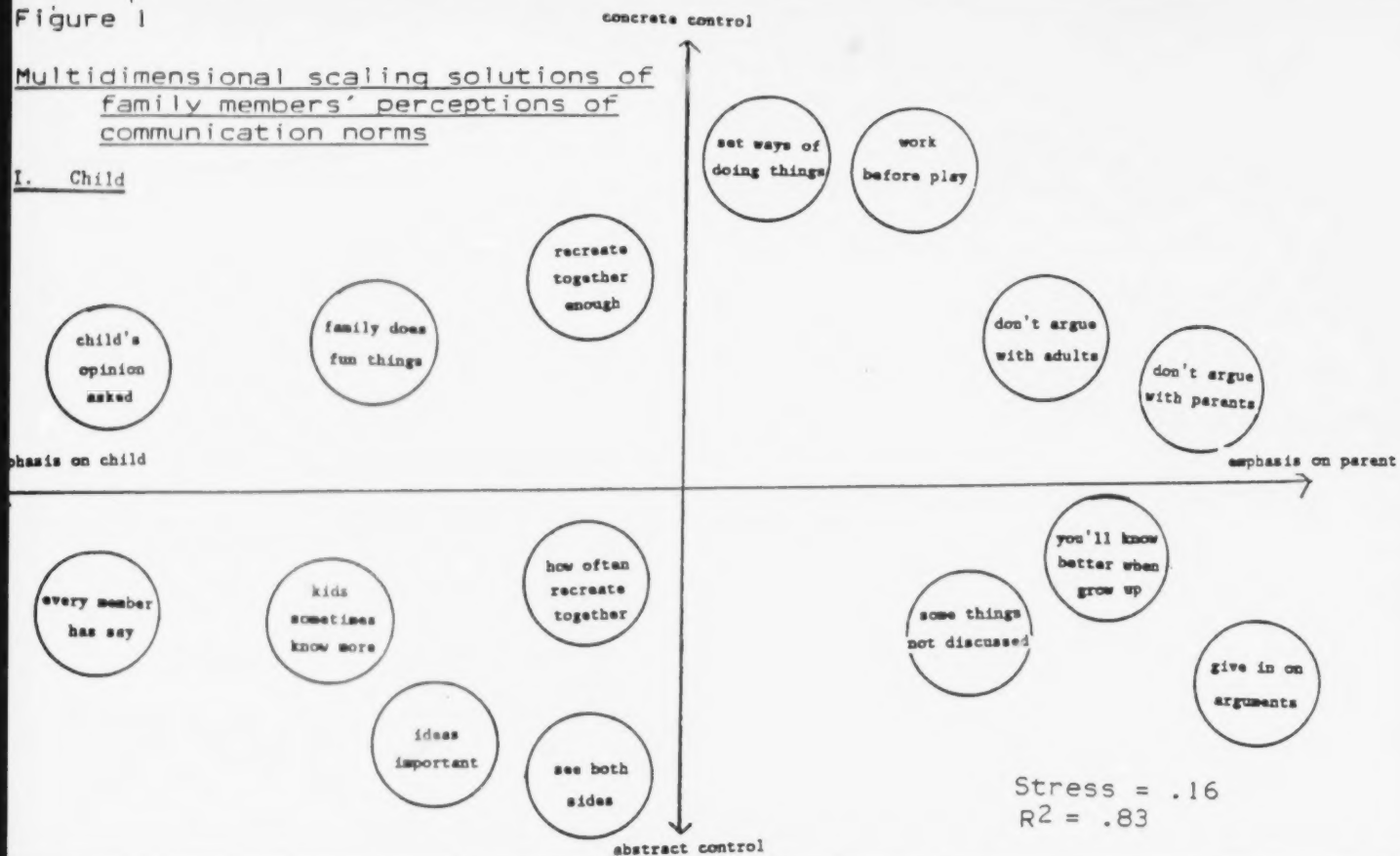
	Involvement (n)		Structure (n)	
	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
Parent				
Laissez-Faire	13	8	16	7*
Protective	17	17	15	18*
Pluralistic	13	11	16	7*
Consensual	15	12	11	16*
Child				
Laissez-Faire	18	7*	12	13
Protective	14	19*	13	19
Pluralistic	15	19*	18	17
Consensual	7	10*	7	10

* $p < .10$

Figure 1

Multidimensional scaling solutions of
family members' perceptions of
communication norms

I. Child



II. Parent

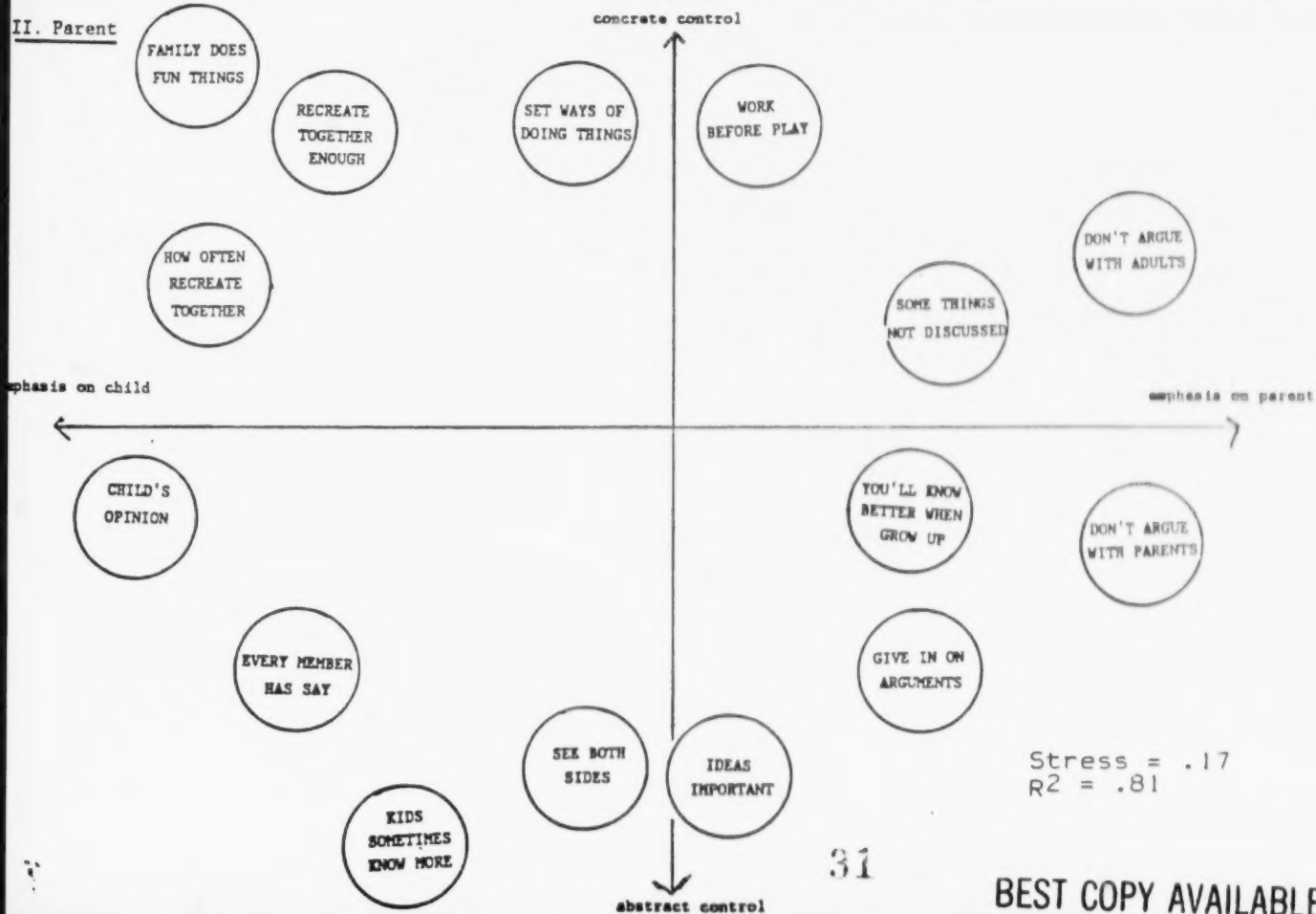
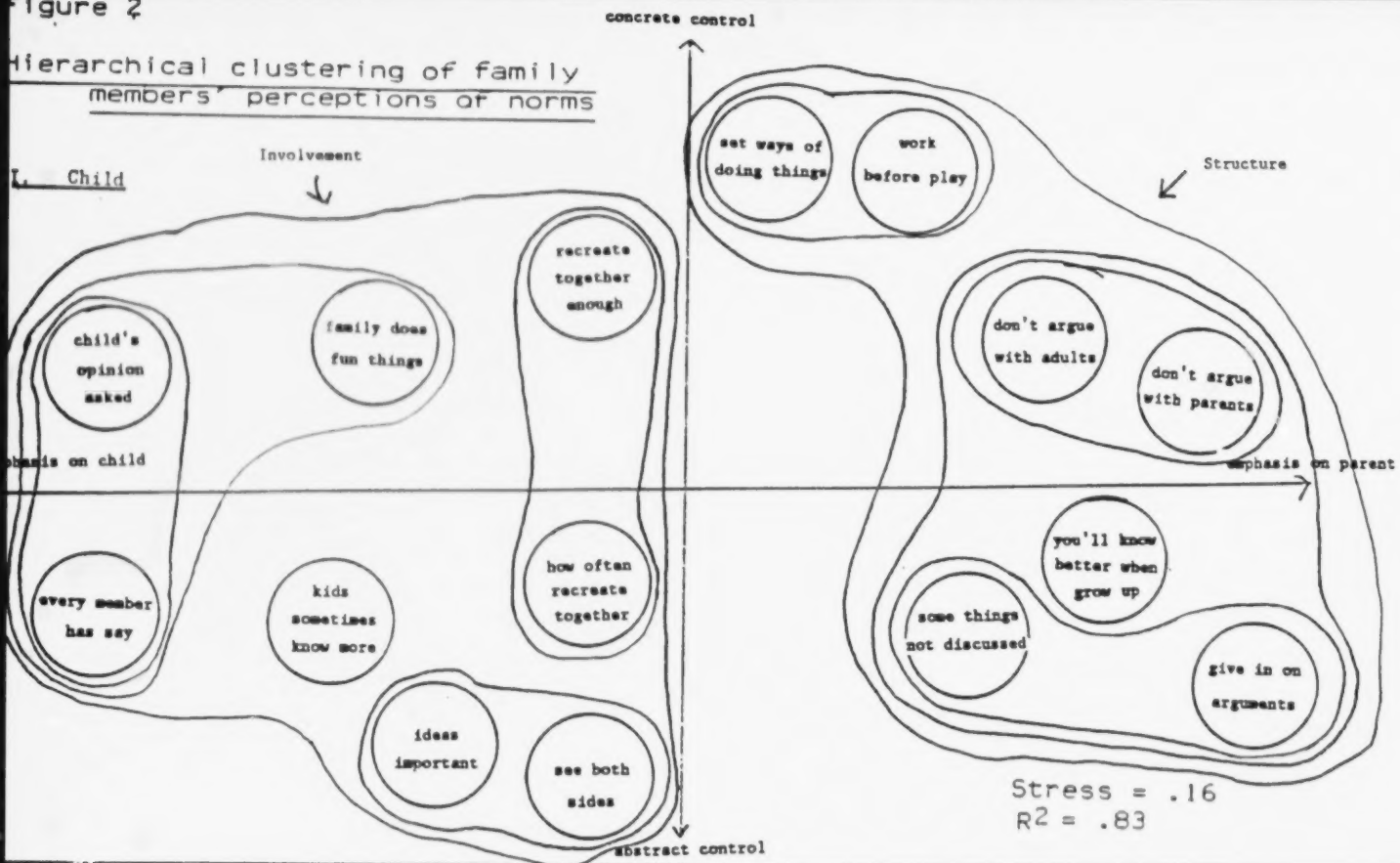
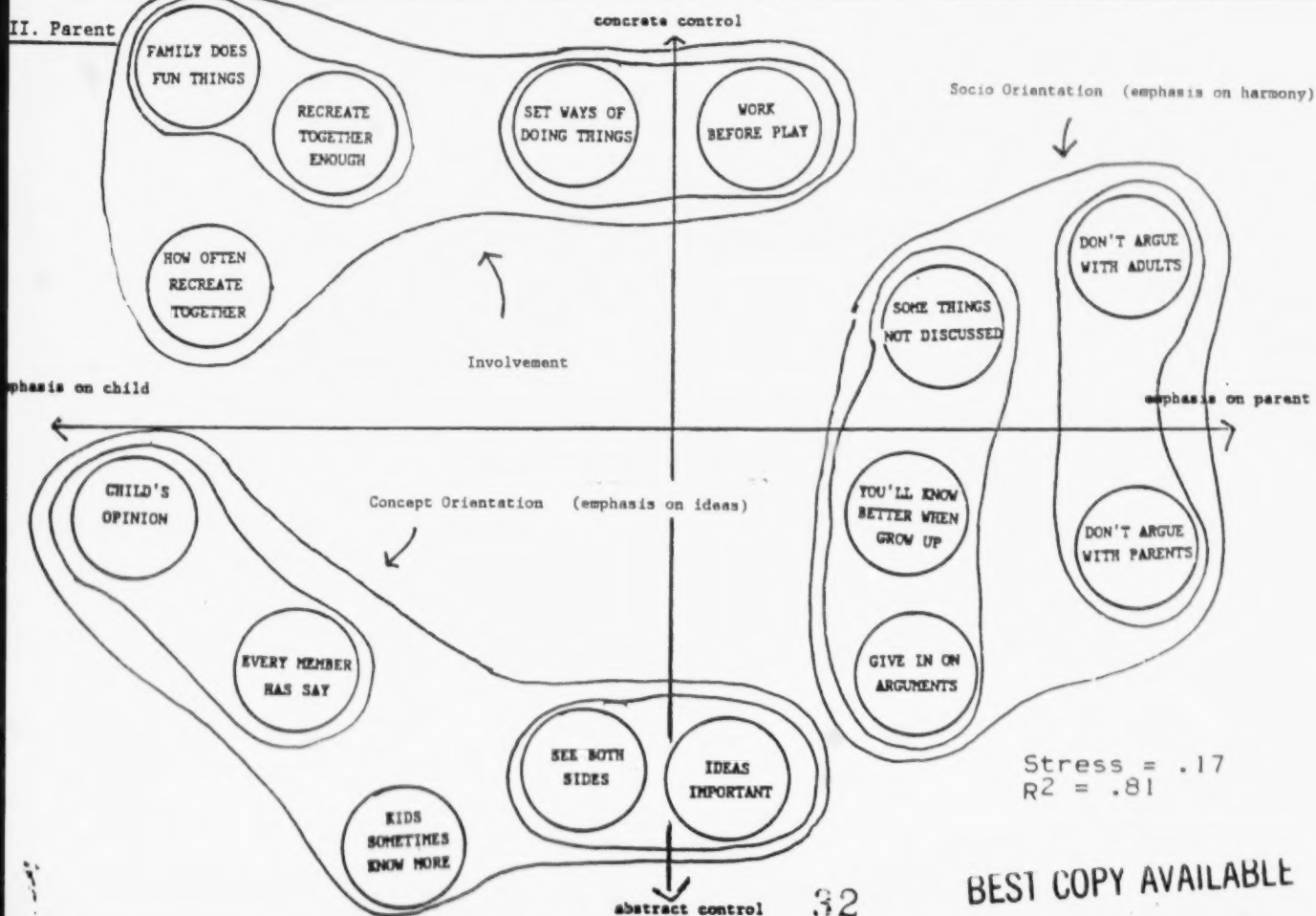


Figure 2

Hierarchical clustering of family members' perceptions of norms



II. Parent

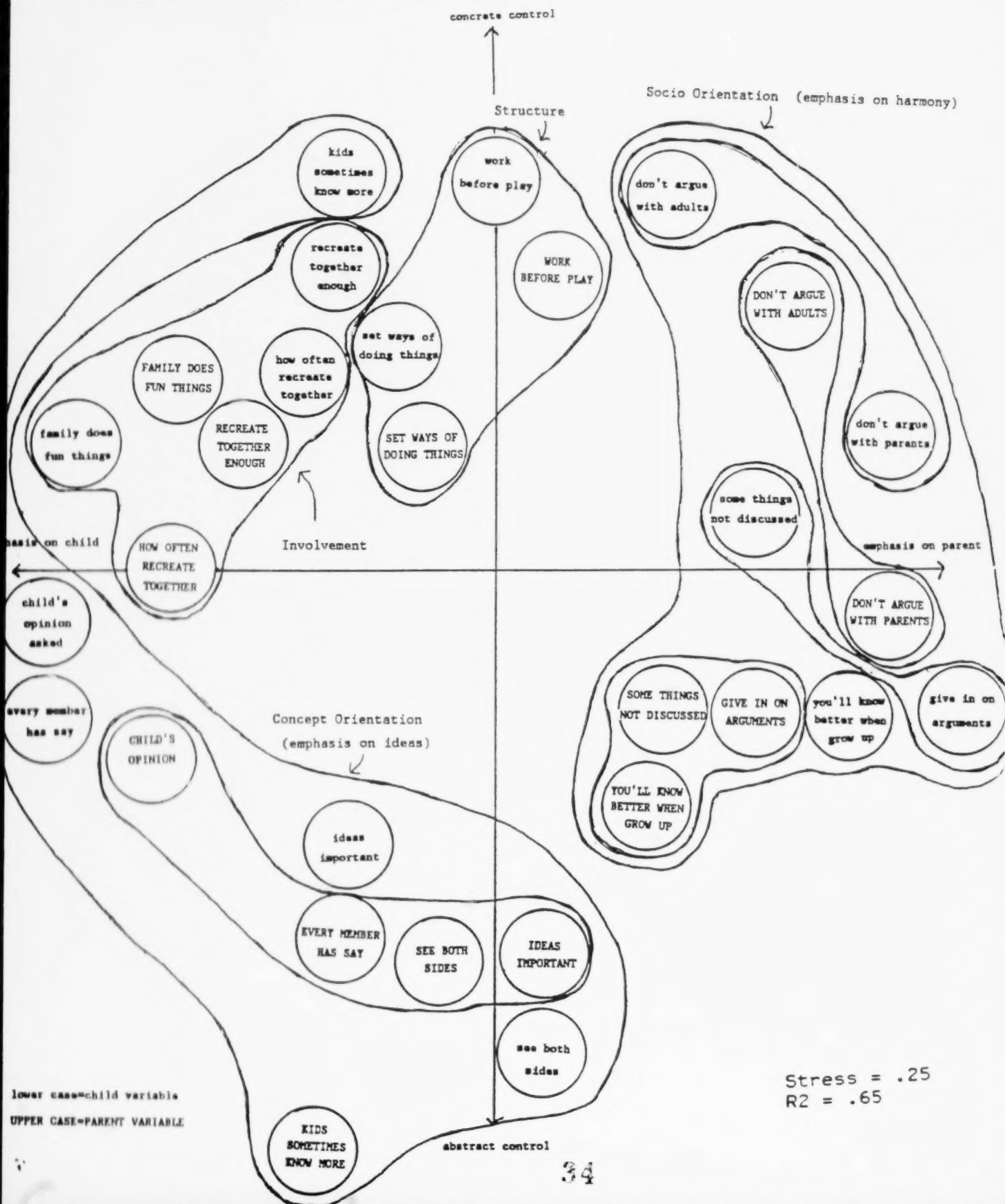


Joint Multidimensional scaling solution of family members' perceptions of norms



Figure 4

Hierarchical clustering of joint
multidimensional scaling solution



Appendix

Questions asked of parent and child used in the current analysis

Family Communication Patterns Socio Orientation:

Frequency of parent saying:

1. Parent's ideas correct and child shouldn't argue with them;
2. Answer child's argument by saying you'll know better when you grow up;
3. You should give in on arguments rather than risk making people angry;
4. There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about;
5. You shouldn't argue with adults.

Family Communication Patterns Concept Orientation:

Frequency of parent saying:

1. You should always look at both sides of an issue;
2. Getting your ideas across is important even if others don't like it;
3. Ask for child's opinion when the family discusses something;
4. Every family member should have some say in family matters;
5. Admit that kids sometimes know more about some things than adults do.

Involvement Variables:

1. My parent and I do some kind of recreational activity together (more than once a day....less than once a week);
2. Does that seem like often enough? (much too often... much too little)
3. We (hardly ever...very often) find time to do fun things together in our family.

Structure:

1. (Very true...not true) that child would get studying done because there are set ways of doing things at home.
2. (Very true... not true) that child would get studying done because, in this family, it's always "work before play."

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